

WASTED POWER.

In looking over the reports from the Presbyteries we were struck with the large number of non-resident members reported. We turned to the minutes of the Assembly for last year and found that the number reported from the whole church was 32,239. This is practically one-tenth of the whole membership, and yet this is probably not all who ought to be included in that list.

The non-resident member is one who has moved so far out of the bounds of the church, with which he is connected, as to be out of vital connection with his church. He cannot attend upon its services nor take any active part in its work. In some few cases he may continue his subscription to the support of his home church, but the probability is that he will not do this.

He may identify himself with some church near which he lives, and take part actively in its work, attending its services and giving to its support. But again the probability is that he will not do so.

The experience of almost every pastor will show that very few cases are known where a member of the church is of much value to a particular congregation, if he is not identified with it by membership.

This is due to several causes. Among them these may be mentioned: He does not feel any special responsibility for the success or the support of this particular church; he feels a little shy about taking hold and doing the work he sees ought to be done; there is a great temptation to shirk work when there is no one to hold us responsible for its non-performance. The result is that a large part of what these members might do is not done, and the Master's cause suffers to just that extent. It is certainly unfortunate for about one tenth of all the working force of the church to be practically idle all the time.

What is the remedy? The simplest and best remedy is for each member of the church to get his letter, join some church in reach of him and go heartily to work. But there are many who will not do this of their own initiative. Our Book of Church Order provides, that, if a member of a church removes from its bounds into the bounds of another church and fails to ask for his letter, the Session of the church from which he has moved shall send his letter to the Session of the church into whose bounds he has moved. On the other hand if the Session does not send the letter the Session of the church in whose bounds he is living is required to assume jurisdiction over him, enroll him in the membership of their church, and notify the other Session that this has been done.

For many years this has been in reality a dead letter of the law. It is claimed that it cannot be enforced without doing violence to the feeling of the member in question. The enforcing of this law ought to be the last resort.

The desired result can be accomplished in most cases much more satisfactorily. Many different courses can be pursued according to the case in hand. The wisest and best plan is for the pastor, when he learns that the member is going to leave for another home, to advise him to take his letter with him, and to tell him all he can about the church and pastor into whose community he is going. Then the pastor or Session should at once write the pastor or Session of the other church announcing his coming. The pastor receiving this information should see that the new comer is given a cordial reception by the church, as well as by himself. A little boy was once asked why he went to a Sunday-

school some distance from his home, when others were nearer. He replied: "Oh! they love a fellow over there." Produce that feeling in the new comer, and, instead of an idler in the community, the church will have a new worker.

The Session of the church to which a member belongs should never lose sight of him or connection with him. If he does not ask for his letter he should be shown his privilege as well as duty to connect himself with a church near his new home.

There is some times a fear that the feelings of the member may be hurt, if it is suggested that he transfer his membership. A reasonable amount of tact and the feeling that the suggestion acted upon will be productive of great good to the one most concerned, will usually relieve pastor or Session of any trouble, and the desired end will be accomplished. It will not often be necessary to go to the extremity of enforcing the law.

If pastors and Sessions will get this idle tenth to work, great good will be accomplished.

PRESBYTERIAN PROBLEMS.

That there are many serious problems before our beloved Church no one doubts. One of the best ways of setting about solving them is to set out clearly what they are. This is the object of this word. These problems may be more acute in one part of our Church than another, but if one member suffers all the members suffer with it, in the true and living body.

One of the problems is the responsibility for the evangelizing of the teeming millions pouring into our South-land. At one time the most thoroughly evangelized section of America, we are in danger of losing that prestige. The unconverted and unsaved may be numbered by the millions. The people who have been invited to the feast have sent excuses, and the Master is bidding us go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.

Are we going? There has been a rising tide of evangelistic spirit in our Church. It is coming up slowly, and we are beginning to see our problem, the carrying of the humbling, yet saving gospel to the heedless, multitudes of our land.

There was a time when the work of the Church was simply to guard the fountains of truth and see that no contamination reached the supply, now it is more, we must carry this pure water of life to helpless sinners who cannot and will not come to drink. We must go out after the lost—not only keep the path plain, and clean. The Department of Evangelization of the Executive Committee of Home Missions stands ready to help solve the problem.

Another serious problem is: the building of our educational institutions.

There was a time when the Presbyterian church stood at the forefront of all in this matter. We have fallen sadly behind. Other denominations have planted and fostered great schools of learning, and on the other hand, the State has extended her universities till they cover our land.

We need a rational system of Church Schools from the High-School up. We have very few High-Schools, and are likely to have fewer. Most Synods have a college, but it is meagrely endowed, and manifestly inferior in many cases, so that it does not command the patronage it might.

The High-School ought to be established wherever opportunity offers, and especially the college, should have a large endowment. In this way, and in this way alone, can the Church

give what all demand, an education under Christian auspices to the youth of our land. To crown it all we need the real university in its widest meaning. An opportunity is given the Church to have one, but it may be like "God's foolish people," as James called the Presbyterians of his day; we may turn our back on the open door.

Can we solve this great problem? Unquestionably we can; when we are broad enough and big enough in our ideas to get above the little educational jealousies that have hindered our Church in the past. There is a plenty of money in Presbyterian hands, but it will never be turned loose as long as we multiply theological seminaries and colleges and universities that are competitors with one another. We must learn the power of co-operative effort. Some of the Synods are learning it, notably the Synod of Texas. Why not the whole Church? Another and more serious problem is in the division of the Presbyterian forces in our land. This diversion exists. There is only one State in the South-land, in which the separation of the Church into two or more Presbyterian bodies does not exist.

This diversion often results in evil, and always in the weakening of the aggressive effort of the Church.

Is there not some way in which the whole force of our Church may be harnessed up to its stupendous task of evangelizing the whole world without the loss by friction of so much of its going power at home? We doubt if any one can suggest a reason that does not spring from charging one side of the Church with heresy; a charge that cannot be proved.

We respectfully submit these problems to our highest and most wise Church Court.

Would it not be better to get the wider vision from prayerfully looking at these and seeking to solve them, than in discussing in these deliverances on minor points, or ambiguous terms of ecclesiastical law?

A. A. L.

PRAY FOR PEACE.

God's people are often urged in these days when the demon of war is rampant in the earth to pray for peace among the nations, and that our own country may be kept in peace. It is probable that more prayers for peace have been offered during the last two years than were ever offered in any century of the past. Why is it that these prayers have not been answered? May it not have been for the same reason that some of our own personal prayers are not answered?

James says (4:3): "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Many who quote this passage stop just here, and then begin to surmise as to the way in which we may ask amiss.

But James settles the question as to the way in which we may ask amiss. Take the whole verse. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." If we want our prayers answered, they must not be selfish. It is all right to ask for things for ourselves, if we have the proper motive in asking them. It would not be right to ask for anything, if we wanted it only to satisfy bodily lusts or desires.

It is right for us to ask for anything that may be used for God's glory or that will fit us better for His service. If we need food to make our bodies strong to do His will, we ought to ask for it. If we want money to advance the kingdom of our Saviour, and are determined to use it unselfishly for that purpose, we have a right to expect that we shall receive it.